

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RO

SUBJ: MANEA MANESCU USES POLITICAL ARGUMENTS FOR MFN

1. DURING TWO RATHER EXTENDED TETE-A-TETE CONVERSATIONS WITH CHARGE AT DINNERS ON OCTOBER 13 AND 15 FOR CEA CHAIRMAN STEIN, MANEA MANESCU STRESSED REPEATEDLY THAT GOR REGARDED ITS RELATIONS WITH US TO BE ESSENTIAL TO ROMANIAN INDEPENDENCE. HE SAID ROMANIAN LEADERSHIP TALKED PUBLICLY OF MFN IN ECONOMIC CONTEXT BUT THAT ITS PRINCIPAL INTEREST IN MFN WAS POLITICAL AND PART OF THIS PROCESS OF REINFORCING ROMANIA'S INDEPENDENCE THROUGH GRADUALLY-EVOLVING STRUCTURE OF MULTIPLE INTERNATIONAL TIES. ECONOMIC UTILITY OF MFN WAS FACTOR, OF COURSE, BUT ROMANIA COULD MAKE ADVANCES WITHOUT IT AND GOR ALSO REALIZED THAT PROBLEMS WOULD REMAIN IN INCREASING EXPORTS TO THE US EVEN IF MFN WERE GRANTED.

2. ROMANIA ALSO HAD ITS "PUBLIC OPINION" TO CONSIDER, EVEN IF THIS WAS PUBLIC OPINION OF DIFFERENT KIND THAN IN US, AND LEADERSHIP NEEDED MFN TO PLACATE THIS "PUBLIC OPINION" WHICH WAS WELL AWARE OF GOR CAMPAIGN TO GET MFN. MANESCU HOPED FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH US IN ORDER TO KEEP DEVELOPING THIS NEEDED POLITICAL BALANCE. THERE WERE DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL SYSTEMS, OF COURSE, BUT THIS WAS NO LONGER SO IMPORTANT AS EARLIER AND CERTAINLY NO IMPEDIMENT TO PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING OUR RELATIONS.

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3. AT ONE POINT, I NOTED IMPROVED US RELATIONS WITH THE

USSR AND EXPRESSED A HOPE THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD AS DENOTING ANY DECREASE IN OUR DESIRE TO SEE A CONTINUED STRENGTHENING OF ROMANIAN INDEPENDENCE. I SAID ROMANIA ITSELF SHOULD BENEFIT BY IMPROVED US-USSR RELATIONS AS IT WOULD INCREASE ROMANIA'S MANEUVERABILITY. MANESCU THEN TOOK ME BY THE ARM AND SAID, "WE APPROVE VERY MUCH YOUR POLICIES OF THE LAST TWO YEARS TOWARD BOTH CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION ALTHOUGH WE MUST CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR OUR INDEPENDENCE IN EVERY WAY WE CAN; ALL WE DO--EVEN ECONOMICALLY-- IS FOR THIS PURPOSE."

4. COMMENT: THERE IS OBVIOUSLY A SELF-SERVING ELEMENT IN PORTIONS OF THE ABOVE RENDITION ALTHOUGH IT ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY CONTAINS LARGE ELEMENT OF TRUTH, PARTICULARLY AS TO IMPORTANCE TO ROMANIA OF US AS FACTOR IN ITS OWN POLITICAL BALANCE CALCULATIONS. IN REFERRING TO LOCAL PUBLIC OPINION, MANESCU PRESUMABLY IS ALLUDING TO POLITICAL ELITE AND ITS VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT-- THAT IS THE SMALL AND CIRCUMSCRIBED BUT NEVERTHELESS REAL POLITICAL CONSTITUENCY THAT CEAUSESCU NOW DOMINATES BUT WHICH COULD BECOME RESTIVE IN WHOLE OR IN PART UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS. WHILE THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT FAILURE TO GRANT MFN WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT TO SHAKE CEAUSESCU'S CURRENT STRONG GRIP ON COUNTRY, THERE IS ALMOST CERTAINLY SOME TRUTH IN IDEA THAT QUESTIONS ARE ASKED (OR MORE LIKELY ARE MERELY LATENT BUT UNDERSTOOD TO LIE PREGNANT BUT UNBORN) AMONG LEADERSHIP AS TO WHETHER AND TO WHAT DEGREE ROMANIAN "OPENING TO WEST" PAYS OFF. IN ANY CASE, MANESCU'S POINTS MAKE INTERESTING PITCH WHICH MAY BE HEARD AGAIN AS HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL AND NON-PUBLIC ARGUMENT FOR MFN OVER AND ABOVE THOSE CONSIDERATIONS THAT APPLY TO USSR AND ITS FRIENDS. MARTENS

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